

63-7342

24 September 1963

The Honorable Richard B. Russell
United States Senate
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator Russell:

The attached copy of an article by Max Freedman is totally inaccurate. I am attempting to determine the source but, as you know, this is an almost impossible task.

However, I have no doubt this editorial will be the basis for speeches on the floor of the Senate by advocates of a joint committee to supervise CIA and others. Because of your interest in CIA's affairs, I am attaching a summary of our reporting over the past 15 months on the erosion of the popularity and strength of the Diem regime. By glancing over the pages you will note CIA reporting represents a remarkably accurate and continuing appraisal of a deteriorating situation and not, as Mr. Freedman states, a series of 'incredible and garish blunders committed in a sickening sequence.'

I have examined with great care the posture of CIA in connection with Viet Nam matters since August 21st, and I am satisfied that we have steadfastly maintained a position of advisors on intelligence matters and have not become "the architect of policy." Our consistent advice both in Washington and Saigon has been to act with care and deliberation in our relationships with the Vietnamese government and to urge those responsible for policy not to engage in a course of action unless a careful appraisal of all related factors evidenced that the course of action would be successful, and secondly, that the resulting situation would be an improvement over the existing one.

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I felt you should be advised of our position because of the very unjust criticism directed at CIA in the press which I am very much afraid is inspired.

I should be glad to discuss this matter privately with you if you wish.

M/R:

Orig & 1 w/same attach-
ments also sent to Carl
Vinson, House of Representa-

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Washington, D. C.

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Sincerely,

John A. McCone
Director

Attachments: 2

JAM:mfb:mcm

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Congress

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